

# The River of EDEN

O R,

A notable Paralell, drawn betwixt that natural River of Water, raised up by GOD, as the Author; and springing out of the Bowels of the Earth, as the Fountain; and anciently running through the Garden of EDEN, for watering the Ground, and making it prolifick, for bringing forth good Fruit in Abundance, for Man's Use, and Comfort, on the one Hand: And the metaphorical River of Unbelief, raised up by the Devil, as the Author; flowing and springing from Atheism, as the Fountain; and presently running through the corrupt Hearts of the Children of Men; for sterelizing these, and rendering them barren, as to all Goodness; and very prolifick and fruitful for all Kind of Wickedness on the other Hand.

**S**eriously reflecting upon the dreadful Effects of that GOD-dishonouring, and Soul-murthering Wickedness of Atheistical Impiety, Incredulity, or Unbelief; so brightly appearing; not only in all Ages and Nations, and among all Ranks and Degrees of Men throughout the whole Universe in general; but especially and chiefly in, and upon

my own Heart in particular, it is no Marvel, tho I be affected with Horror thereat, and horrible Detestation thereof. Since, as all Men ought to know ( at the least to give all possible Diligence in endeavouring to know ) the desperat. Wickedness of their own Hearts ( in order to their being deeply humbled therefore ; and likewise moved and stirred up thereby, to run to the Physician of Hearts, for Cure and Relief therefrom ) So of the gracious Goodness of GOD, I hope, I may humbly, yea seriously and truly affirm, that I know so much of my own Heart, as might make me, not only to be humbled, and stirred up, as is aforesaid : But furthermore also, by reflecting now, or when I reflect, upon the famous River which went out of EDEN. Gen: 2, 10. With Shame and Sorrow, in the very worst of Senses, properly to compare the hateful Unbelief lodging in this wicked Heart of mine, ( and daily sending forth poisonous Streams of Wickedness therefrom ) to that River aforesaid ; and that in diverse Respects hereafter to be mentioned : Now that our Thoughts here may be rendered the more intelligible to any Reader whatsoever, this Method following, we intend to observe in Prosecution of this Discourse at present.

*First,* To show the several natural Streams whereinto that ancient River of EDEN divided it self, with the respective metaphorical Streams of Sin, as Parallels thereunto.

*Secondly,* To run the Paralell between some few



few following Particulars, relative to the Subject in Hand; Viz, First, Between **EDEN**, and the Heart of Man. Secondly, Between the natural Spring or Fountain of that most necessary and comfortable Creature (*Water*) in **EDEN**: and the metaphorical Spring or Fountain of all Wickedness, Viz, *Atheism*, in the Heart of Man. And as the former, Viz, that natural Fountain in **EDEN** was still spouting and bubling up all that great Quantity of Water, which both made up, and kept full that famous River in **EDEN**: Even so the latter, Viz, That metaphorical Spring or Fountain of all Wickedness, Viz, *Atheism* in the Heart of Man, is still bubling and sending up such an innumerable Number of GOD-dishonouring and hellish Thoughts, as (where Grace prevents not) does undoubtedly make up, and keep full, that dreadfull River of Unbelief constantly in the Heart of Man. Thirdly, Between the Earth it self, out of which that natural Fountain did flow and proceed; and *Atheism* again, either taken as that metaphorical Fountain of all Wickedness, it self; or otherwise as the proper Subject, whence the same proceeds. Fourthly, Between the multiplied Drops of Water proceeding from that natural Fountain aforesaid: And the manifold hatefull Thoughts proceeding from that metaphorical Fountain of *Atheism*, or an atheistical Heart. Fifthly, Between that famous River it self, which went out of **EDEN**: And that terrible River of Unbelief both made up, and kept full, where Grace prevents not, as said is, yet

And likewise, where Grace is not altogether wanting ; yet for the Creatures Humiliation, and other holy and wise Ends known to himself, GOD diverse Times permits such hatefull and unhappy Thoughts to raise that dreadful River to a great Height in diverse Persons : Yea and in some Degree or other, in the best of Men, in this State of Corruption, wherein all Mortalls are at present.

And which being done, we shall endeavour, in the third and last Place, to give some rational Acompt, why (among such an innumerable Number of Streams or Heads of Sin and Wickedness, all flowing from the Fountain or Spring of *Atheism*, through the large River of Unbelief, and running swiftly towards that infernal Ocean of Wo and Misery hereafter to be mentioned [ as well as these particularly chosen by us, ] these only ( yea and such a particular Number likewise ) should be selected and chosen by us, rather than any of all the Rest ; and thereafter conclude this Discourse.

Now to return to the first of these, *Viz* : To show the several natural Streams, wherein that ancient River of *E'D E N* divided it self ; with the respective metaphorical Streams of Sin, as Parallels thereunto : To render this the more intelligible, I say, as that natural River presently mentioned divided it self into four great Streams or Branches : So all the loathsome Wickedness, flowing from that abominable River of Unbelief, lodging in, and running through this  
Heart

Heart of mine, may, by way of Paralell, be fairly reduced unto some one or other of these four great Heads or Streams of Sin, which shortly hereafter are to be mentioned and explained.

So then that the Paralell may the more brightly appear, there are three Things worthy to be observed in this place: Viz, First, The Spring, Fountain; or *Terminus a quo*, as they use to say, of each one of these Rivers, both natural and metaphorical formerly spoken of. Secondly, The various Streams or Branches, whereinto both the one and the other of these two different Rivers aforesaid, is divided, or divides it self, and is parted. Thirdly and Lastly, The common Receptacle, or *Terminus ad quem*, as it is termed; whereunto all the various Streams of these two different Rivers do run, and disgorge themselves.

And now to begin with the Spring, Fountain, or *Terminus a quo*, as we were saying, of that natural River, we are presently speaking of (which went out of EDEN, to water the Garden) undoubtedly it behoved to be in that Place, Viz, in EDEN; still spouting and bubling up innumerable Drops of Water, whereof it was made and consisted; and whereby it was kept full without Diminution. And then Secondly, Next as to the Streams or Branches of that same River whereunto it was divided and parted; the Scripture assures us here, that it parted, or divided it self into these four Heads immediatly following, Viz, *Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates.* Thirdly and Lastly, The common Receptacle, or



*Terminus ad quem*, to which all these four great Streams or Heads of that River, unanimously (as it had been) and naturally did run, was assuredly the great Ocean, called the Seas, which GOD had appointed for the Gathering together of the Waters, that they might not overflow the Earth or dry Land, *Gen: 1, 9*. Even so in like Manner, the Spring, or Fountain of all Sins whatsoever ( *Atheism* I mean ) I know most certainly to be in my Heart; yea and in the Heart of every mortal Man presently living upon this Earth; Altho no ways in equal Degrees; yet there is none, nor can there possibly be any, while in a corrupted State of Mortality, perfectly free hereof. Now this Spring or Fountain, is still raising, or (by the innumerable Number of sinful, idle, yea, and, but too frequently, hatefull Thoughts flowing and proceeding therefrom) at the least endeavouring to raise, the dreadfull River of Unbelief, which again divides it self, into a great many, but (for to make the Paralell, I am now aiming at, run equal here, in Respect of Number in the first Place) into these Four principal Streams or Heads of Sin and Wickedness [ and by which, or some of which, it conveyes it self, and all its impenitent Partakers, directly toward the infernal Ocean of Wo and and Misery, as the great and common Receptacle whereunto it runs, and wherein it disgorges it self, and all its Relations formerly mentioned. ] Now the four several [ particularly chosen by me ] Streams of Sin, flowing from the dreadful River of Unbelief,

lied, and lodged in the Hearts of Men, and leading to that common Receptacle and Ocean of Wo and Misery aforesaid, are as follows, VIZ, Sins, First, Of Doubting and Distrusting GOD's Providence, Promises, Threatnings, or any divine Revelation in general, and of diffident and despondent Fears in particular. Secondly, Sins of Grudging, Murmuring, Freting, or Repining, at any of the LORD's Dispensations. Thirdly, Such Sins as have a Relation to the Use of Means, for bringing about of any End whatsoever here in this Life, whither temporal or spiritual [and which Stream or Head of Sin subdivides it self again, into five different Branches, which shortly hereafter we intend to particularize.] Fourthly, Sins of anxious, carking and solicitous Cares, about any temporal Things whatsoever.

So then to return to the first of those, The first Stream or Head of such Sins flowing from the Fountain of *Atheism*, through the River of Unbelief, is that, of Sins, of Doubting or Distrusting either GOD's Providence, Promises, Threatnings, or any divine Revelation in general, and of diffident and despondent Fears in particular. Now this is the most dangerous Head of all the four Streams, proceeding as is aforesaid: Yea no Sin whatsoever, is more dishonourable or displeasing unto GOD, then this Sin is. If it shall be said here, That diverse other Sins are undoubtedly more displeasing unto GOD then this, particularly Blasphemy, and such like GOD-dishonouring Provocations,



I answer

I answer, First, as to other Sins, 'tis time enough to answer for them when they are named; and next as to Blasphemy, that which chiefly renders it so abhorrible, is, in Respect the Blasphemer distrusts, either the Being, or some of the glorious perfections of GOD: All which, if firmly believed; No Man would ever presume to Blaspheme. So this is answerable to the first stream or Branch of that River, which went out of *EDEN*, whose name is *Pison*; that is it which compasseth the whole Land of *Havilah*, where [ as *Moses* tells us ] there is Gold, and the Gold of that Land is Good: *There is Bdelium and the Onyx stone*; as if [ to make an equal Paralell, by Way of Contraries, or dissimilitude, between the first Head or Stream of that River of *EDEN*, namely *Pison*; and this first Stream or Head of Sins, called *Doubting, Distrusting &c*: Proceeding as is above mentioned ] *Moses* had said that *Doubting, Distrusting &c*: Are so displeasing in the sight of GOD, and a well grounded Faith, and firm Trust, & Confidence in GOD's Mercy, through a Mediator, so acceptable to him; as that whosoever is blessed therewith, shall want neither Riches, Pleasures, nor Honours, (under which three, all good things which Men desire in this World, are summarily comprehended, and all which three again seems to be implied in that Description, we were presently mentioning, which *Moses* gives of that Land ) For, sayes he, in that Land, where that Stream runs, [ here we are not to understand the Stream of *Doubting, Distrusting &c*: But, [ seeing this Paralell we are presently



sently handling, runs by way of contraryes in this  
 place, ] the contrary of these, *Viz*, a well grounded  
 Faith, and firm Trust and Confidence in GOD's  
 Mercy through a Mediator ) there is not only  
 Gold, or common Gold; but Gold thats good, even  
 the best of Gold, to enrich all that dwells in that  
 Land, that is to say, all who are blessed with these  
 Graces presently mentioned [ the remarkable  
 contraryes of that first Stream or Head of Sins  
 proceeding from Unbelief, *Viz*, Doubting, Distrust-  
 ing &c: ] Together with Jewels, precious jewels,  
*Viz*; *Bdelium and the Onyx stone*, to render their  
 lives both pleasant unto themselves; and creditable  
 and honourable also in the sight of others. Now,  
 as I dare not, on the one Hand, affirm that such a Pa-  
 raphrastical Interpretation was certainly intended  
 either by the Spirit of GOD, or by Moses his Pen-  
 man, in writting this history: So neither dare I  
 presume (yea, it were no less then dreadfully pre-  
 sumptuous boldness in any Mortal ) on the other  
 Hand, to affirm, that such an explication were  
 directly contrary to the intention of either. As  
 for my self, I only mention the same Hypothetically,  
 or by way of supposition; as supposing Moses to  
 have said, or intended so; to shew both the High  
 value that he put upon a firm Faith, and well  
 grounded Trust and Confidence in GODs Mercy,  
 through a Mediator: And also his great abhor-  
 rence and detestation of the Sin of Doubting, Dis-  
 trusting &c: And to render the hatefull, yea  
 hellish Sin of Unbelief [ the Mother of all wicked-  
 nesses ] abominable to all Men. So [passing this, I  
 shall

I shall proceed to the second Head or Stream of Sins flowing from that fatal River of unbelief, and Fountain of Atheism; and that is, of Sins of murmuring, fretting, grudging, or repining at any of the LORDs dispensations, and surely this Stream or kind of Sins [ next after Doubting, Distrusting &c ] may be reckoned the most abominable of all the streams, proceeding as is aforesaid, in the sight of GOD, as appears from *Num; 14.* throughout, particularly from ver: 26, and also from the *1 Cor: 10, 10.* Now this stream is answerable to the second head of that River, which went out of *EDEN*, called *Gihon*, compassing the whole Land of *Ethiopia*. The third Stream or head of Sins again, proceeding as we have several times mentioned already, is of such Sins as have a relation to the use of means, for bringing about of any end whatsoever, whether Spiritual or Temporal in this Life. And which stream or Head of Sins subdivides it self again [ as is aforesaid ] into five different Branches, which are these immediately following, *Viz*, 1<sup>st</sup> Sins of limiting the LORD GOD Almighty, to such and such Means, Wayes, or Times, as Men judge most fitt and convenient. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Sins of using any unlawful means, for freedom or relief, out of any strait or difficulty. 3<sup>dly</sup>, Sins of omitting the use of Lawful means commanded and allowed by GOD, when the Lord provides and presents such. 4<sup>thly</sup>, Sins in, slightly negligently or carelessly performing, or going about the use of such. 5<sup>thly</sup>, Sins of trusting in, or relying upon the means; and consequently making

making Idols of them: Now this Stream of Sins and all the five several Branches thereof are answerable to the 3<sup>d</sup> Stream or head of that River which went out of EDEN called Hiddekel, which goeth toward the East of Assyria. The 4<sup>th</sup> and last Stream of Sins proceeding from Atheistical Unbelief, is that of anxious carking and solicitous Cares about any Temporal things whatsoever, which our blessed Saviour earnestly exhorts us to guard against Matt: 6. 25 and down ward to the end: and also his Apostles, Paul Phil: 4. 6. and Peter 1 Pet. 5. 7. And the blessed Psalmist likewise Psal 55: 22. and this Stream again we reckon, is answerable to the 4<sup>th</sup> and last Head of that River which went out of EDEN, and which is called Euphrates So these we esteem to be the four principal Streams, or chief Heads of Sin [ & unto some one, or other of which, all other sins of whatsoever, mediately or immediatly, may be reduced ] whereinto that dreadful River, and Mother Sin of Unbelief, parts and divides it self; and by which, or some of which, different Branches or Streams, it conveyes it self, and all its impenitent partakers, nourishers, or fosterers, violently and precipitately, without any let or stop whatsoever (if unfained Repontance and amendment timeously prevent not) down toward that infernal Ocean formerly mentioned; and into which it disgorges it self, and its forsaids, without all peradventure: unless a proper stop, as we were presently hinting at, be put to the current; and which again can never be performed, without diligent



diligent endeavours of drying up the Fountain, so that the River it self, and all the several Streams or Branches thereof might be correspondently lessened. So having spoken sufficiently as to what concerns the Streams, both natural and Metaphorical, let us in the 2<sup>d</sup> place proceed and run the Parallel between some few following particulars relative to the subject in Hand, as our prescribed method engages us: And thus to begin with the first of these, Viz: With the Paralell between EDEN and the Heart of Man: Now that the same may be rendered more clearly intelligible, the two different states between GOD and Man, are to be observed, Viz: First, A state of Peace and Friendship. Secondly, A state of War and Enmity. First then, During the state of Peace and Friendship between them: As EDEN was the most proper Place [ as chosen by never-erring Wisdom ] wherein both GOD, on the one Hand, might reveal himself most frequently unto, converse most familiarly with, and confer Favours and Love-tokens most remarkably upon Adam, Eva, and their posterity; and they on the other Hand might be capable to pay up and perform the most acceptable Service, Honour, Homage and Obedience toward him again: Even so now the Heart of Man (while mortal, and in a state of Friendship with GOD) is the most proper and convenient place, within the whole universe, for performing and expeding all these aforesaid ends; so as the fruits and effects of these, (both Divine and humane) might diversie times, and

and upon several occasions, prove evidently conspicuous, to all rational observers. And next as to the state of War and Enmity between them, as GOD, after the fall, thrust Man out of EDEN, or Paradiſe; ſo they again [ to quit ſcores with him ] uſually, yea conſtantly ( during the ſtate of War ) thruſts him out of their Hearts *ſal: 10, 4,* 2dly, As GOD employed Cherubims or Angels, to keep them out, and to ſtop their returning and entry there again: So they ( rather then he ſhall enter into their Hearts ) will chooſe to place a Guard of Devils to hold him out, ſuch as a proud Devil, a prophane Devil, a falſe Devil, a malicious Devil, each Man conform to his, now corrupted, natural inclination. 3dly, As GOD not only employed Cherubims, but gave them Weapons alſo (*Viz, A Flaming Sword*) both to affright, and force them to hold off: So they again, to ſhew their Warlike Diſpoſition, and to kyth themſelves forward to keep him off, altho for want of ſkill but not for want of will ] they cannot arm the Devils; yet rather then they ſhould fail here, or come any way behind, even GOD himſelf, in diſguice for Executing their Warlike deſign they will provide Weapons for themſelves [ ſuch as the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life; wherewith being girded, and handſomely covered and armed, they may be capable to fight ſtoutly and boldly on the Devils ſide, and under his banner, to make GOD himſelf ſtand off. Now tho this be the moſt deplorably Deſperate Condition that any Creature whatſomever can poſſibly

ably be tryed with on this side of Hell: Yet even in this case Our Blessed GOD not only can, but even actually also diverse times doth, Gloriously manifest both his irresistible Power, unparalle Goodness, stupendiously astonishing [ as well altogether undeserved ] merciful Kindness, kyth then upon, and conspicuously manifested toward such GOD-affronting Desperadoes. For [ passing over, as it were in most Profound silence here, the Mercy of Mercies, which Angels admire, his sending his only One, well Beloved Son from the highest Degree of happiness and Glory in Heaven; to the Deepest Gulf of Misery, Pain and Disgrace here, upon Earth, and that alienarly ( by the Misery, Grief and Sorrow of such a near, dear, and precious Relation ) to satisfy spotless Justice, for the inexcusable provocations of such bold, daring and desperate Rebels; and to render such Everlasting happy: And which unparallelled, and never enough admired Mercy notwithstanding, many times formerly, these (beyond all comparison) unaccountable Fools, and unthankful Wretches, had made and willfully slighted, and condemned! Yet here Ob here only! Let us but consider what creature Understanding can be capable to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the matchless Love, & Pity, Compassion & Commiseration which stirred up & enclined such a frequently most justly and highly incensed Majesty, by putting in his Hand by the Lock hole of the Door ( bolted and barred against him, with all the strongest and most numerously multiplied Bolts and Bars that either



Men or Devils or rather both Men and Devils  
 could think upon, or invent, by there firmly, and  
 solutely united, Power, Policy, and Malice; to-  
 gether with all the aid, Hell or Earth could afford  
 em ) And then turning about the wairds & sprents  
 of the Heart; and so out over the very Belly, as  
 were, of all Enemies whatsoever; particularly  
 both of the most desperately bold Devils, and most  
 willfully obdured Sinners of Mankind: Then even  
 then, of such desperate, careless, willfully obdured,  
 and firmly resolved Enemies, to make cheerfully  
 willing subjects, and Servants to himself, in the  
 Day of his Power! This, Oh this indeed! Or no-  
 thing, loudly proclaims him to be both a most  
 powerful and Mereyfull GOD: And that infinitely  
 beyond and above the highest conception of all  
 created Understanding. Next as to the *Second*  
*parallel Viz:* Between that Spring or Fountain in  
 EDEN, and Atheism in the Heart of Man.

*First,* As that Spring or Fountain did spring  
 up and proceed from the Earth; so the Love of  
 Earthly Things is the chiefeft and greatest Fos-  
 terer, and most kindly nurse of Atheism. *Secondly,*  
 As that Spring or Fountain was in a most Fruitful  
 place, so where the Lord bestowes the greatest  
 Temporal Blessings, Atheism frequently takes the  
 deepest root *Lake. 12. 16. 16. 19.* *Thirdly,* As  
 that Fountain was still spouting and bubling up  
 such an innumerable Number of Water drops, as  
 after another great Number of such like drops  
 had formerly fill'd and made up I did then continue  
 to hold up, and keep full that Famous River  
 which

which went out of EDEN : Even so Atheism in the Heart of Man, after that by a numberless Number of hellish Thoughts, it has once made up that River of unbelief ; it still keeps that River full by the frequently renewing of such unhappy thoughts afterwards. *Fourthly*, As a Spring or Fountain is so inexhaustible as that ordinarily nothing below the Power of GOD, can make it run dry : and which [ altho sometimes, yet ] but seldom and rarely he doth so : Even so Atheism continues to run as inexhaustibly in the Heart of the wretched Sinner, and as seldom, yea far more seldom uses GOD to put a stop thereunto, [ then to the Springs and Veins of the Earth ] especially when kindly entertained by the foolish and unhappy Creature. As to the third Paralell *Viz* : Between the Earth it self, and Atheism ; the Paralell holds here, *First*, in Respect of the Nature, or Qualifications rather, of the subjects Paralelled *Viz* : Of the Earth, and Atheism ; for as the Earth is the lowest, basest, yea, and the very Dregs, as it were, of all the four Elements ; even so Atheism, is the basest, and most hatefull of all Wickedness, or Sins whatsoever. For tho' it be true, that GOD hates and abhors every Sin whatsoever, with a perfect hatred ; yet undoubtedly there are some Sins of a far deeper dy then others : Now Atheism is such a Sin, as none exceeds, yea scarce any equals it, in its horrible and atrocious Nature, both in the sight of GOD and Man. *Secondly*, In Respect of the Estimation put thereupon by their respective Devoutness ; for as Wordly Men place there confidence

confidence in this Earth, and in the products thereof,  
 as judgeing it capable to free them from all Mi-  
 sery and Danger whatsoever: So when Men  
 habituat themselves to any vicious or sinful course,  
 there is, nothing they have in more value then  
 Atheism; Athiestical thoughts, and groundless  
 hopes that perhaps there is not a GOD, or su-  
 preme Judge: For this way, yea only this way, they  
 expect to secure themselves, both from the scalding  
 drops of GOD's wrath ( which they either hear  
 or see other Sinners dreadfully tormented with,  
 sometimes even in this Life ) and also from the  
 severe Lashes of their own Conscience. *Thirdly*,  
 In Respect of Duration, For as this Earth will  
 continue till the last Day, or till the Day of  
 Judgement: Even so the Duration of *Atheism*  
 will be of no shorter Date. *Fourthly*, In Re-  
 spect of the final Period, or Consummation, for  
 as this Earth and the Works that are therein,  
 shall be consumed with Fire, and burnt up; and  
 then, and in that Manner come to a Period;  
 even so *Atheism* [ how long soever other Sins  
 may continue in Hell perchance, yet *Atheism* ]  
 certainly shall never have the least Entrance,  
 or the very shortest Time of Abode any more  
 for ever, in the Thought or Imagination of so much  
 as of any one Inhabitant, either of Heaven or  
 Hell, throughout the everlasting Duration of ne-  
 ver-ending Eternity. *Fifthly*, As to the Para-  
 llell between the multiplied Drops of Water,  
 proceeding from that natural Fountain, and the  
 manifold hatefull Thoughts flowing from *Atheism*,  
 or an Atheistical Heart. *First*, As such Water  
 Drops



Drops are fluid, unconstant, or vagrant: So nothing more fluid, unconstant, and unaccountably vagrant, then, Atheistical Thoughts: And no Marvel indeed, it being utterly impossible for such to have any Ground whatsoever to fix upon. Secondly, As a Man, tho he might have stopp'd a considerable Number of such Drops from ascending to that River; Yet none below GOD Himself could have stopp'd so many as could have dried up that River, yea or so many as could have rendered it remarkably less: Even so, if a Man were seriously willing, he might indeed stop a great Number of such unhappy Thoughts; yet such getting but once free Entry into a Man's Heart, none below GOD, can stop them from filling up, or from keeping full, that dreadful River of Unbelief: And which very single Consideration alone might make the Stoutest to tremble when they perceive any such, but once beginning to arise in their Minds. Thirdly, As neither the Heat of Summer, nor Cold of Winter, could stop these Drops from rising out of such a rich Fountain, in such a warm Soil, as EDEN: Even so, neither the Heat of Prosperity, nor the Cold of Adversity, can stop wicked, godless, and GOD-dishonouring Thoughts from rising in an Atheistical Heart. Fourthly, As to the Paralell between that natural River aforesaid, and that fearful metaphorical River of Unbelief, made up, & kept full, the one by such innumerable Drops of Water, the other by such a Number of wicked Thoughts, as we were presently speaking of.

First,

*First*, As that natural River was a very remarkable Token of GOD's both Wisdom and Kindness to Mankind, as being very both necessary and useful, for watering the Earth, and rendering it fruitful, for the comfortable Sustentation both of Man and Beast, especially after the Fall: So, on the contrary, by Way of Dissimilitude, that metaphorical River of Unbelief, is a conspicuous Evidence of the most unaccountable Folly, as well as inexcusable Ingratitude, in the Unbeliever; toward that wise, kind, and obliging Benefactor, to whom he owes Soul, Body, yea and the very Power of believing; and all that he either is, has, or ever can expect, now or for ever.

*Secondly*, As the natural Spring or Fountain, and the great River it self, behoved to be very contiguous, or near one another; for the Scripture shews us, that it was a River before it went out of EDEN. So *Atheism* and *Unbelief*, the metaphorical both Spring and River, are most contiguous Neighbours, and near one another, if they be not both one and the same.

*Thirdly*, As that River behoved to be a broad River and large, having so many broad Grains and Streams, whereof the large River of *Euphrates* is reckoned but as one: Even so *Unbelief* is the largest and broadest of all Sins whatsoever, yea even the Mother Sin, as including all the rest in its Belly.

*Fourthly*, As EDEN was the only Soil, that we read of, in the whole Earth, whence such a huge Spring or Fountain did arise and proceed,

as was capable to send forth such an innumerable Number of Drops as both made up, and kept full, such a singularly large River as this we are presently treating of: Even so the Heart of Man unregenerat, is the only Soil, that we read of, in the whole Earth, whence such a huge Spring, or Fountain of *Atheism* can proceed, sending forth such an innumerable Number of godless, wicked, and unhappy Thoughts as both makes up, and keeps full, that large and, dreadful River of Unbelief, we are presently mentioning.

*Fifthly*, As that River which went out of *EDEN*, if it was not the only first and most ancient, yet without all peradventure it was one of the first and most ancient Rivers that did ever run here upon this terraqueous Glob: Even so Unbelief, if it was not the only first and most ancient, yet without the least Doubt it was one of the first and most ancient Sins, that ever Man (shall I say? Nay, rather Man or Angel) was guilty of: For it had been altogether impossible for a rational Creature ever to have presumed in the least to have sinned, and provoked to Wrath, such a tremendous and Sin-abhorring Majesty: while it consideratly and firmly believed all his glorious & adorable Perfections.

*Sixthly*, That River behaved to be a very healthful River, as appears from *Gen: 2, 9, 10*. Even so (by Way of Dissimilitude or Contraries) Unbelief is the very Bane and Poison of Souls, *Mark: 16, 16*.

*Seventhly*, That River in *EDEN* undoubtedly has



has been a most fruitful River, being placed in such a pleasant and fertile Soil: Even so in the very worst Sense, Unbelief as it is the largest and broadest, so undoubtedly it is the most fertile of all Sins imaginable.

Thus having finished these Paralells, we shall proceed, as our Subject engages us, to give some rational Account why (among such an innumerable Number of Streams or Heads of Sin and Wickedness, all flowing from the Fountain of *Atheism*, through the River of Unbelief, and running swiftly towards that infernal Ocean several Times heretofore mentioned, as well as these four particularly chosen) these only should be selected and chosen, rather than any of the rest. Especially since diverse other Sins can be named which cannot properly be reduced unto any one of these four Heads particularly chosen, such as Covetousness, Viz, Prophaness, Pride, Superstition. &c. In answering hereunto, I shall begin; First with these Sins which are instanced, as not reducible to any of the four Heads aforesaid, by affirming confidently that all these, yea and many other such like, are as fairly reducible to the first of these four Heads Viz, Doubting, Distrusting, &c: As Blasphemy it self, which was formerly objected, Page 7. And whereunto a rational Answer was given, Page 8. Which equally agrees with, and may satisfy for, all these instanced Sins, and many more such like, as well as for it: Which I refer to the serious Consideration of every impartial Reader whatsoever. And then next, As to the

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Account

Account instantly spoken of, I say,

First, Because we being to run a Paralell between that River which went out of *EDEN*, and that metaphorical River of Unbelief, it was necessar ( for making the Paralell run equal in Respect of Number ) that as the former River had four several Heads or Streams, all immediately proceeding from it self, whereinto it was parted and divided: Even so the latter, Viz: That metaphorical one of Unbelief, should likewise have four several Heads, Streams, or Kinds of Sin all, in that same Manner, proceeding from it self, as being remarkable Parts and Portions thereof. So this much for the Number. Next then, As to the Kinds, altho there be very many different Kinds of Sins, all flowing as naturally from that metaphorical River of Unbelief, and perhaps the most part, if not all of them, having as near a relation thereunto, as these four Particularly chosen by us, yet if it can be made evident. First. That these four aforesaid, do really proceed from, and have an undenyable relation unto, that unhappy River we are presently Speaking of: And 2dly. That no other kind of Sin can be named, that has a nearer relation thereunto then they, ( viz. The four particularly chosen ) then surely in such a Case, none can deny our choise to be sufficiently good, for making the Paralell run equal ( and that not only in respect of Number, but even likewise of the kind ) But the former in both its Branches is true. Ergo. The Minor in both the Branches will easily be made evident, after we have given another Reason of this

th's our particular choise of these four, rather then of any of the rest: And that is because the most part of Men by far, and that even of all Ranks and Estates, if they would impartially Examine themselves, would find that they are guilty of, or at the least enclined unto, many if not the most part of all these kinds of Sins, formerly particularized, when trysted with alluring and suitable Temptations: Whereas on the other hand, altho they know that now, in this State of Corruption, the root of all Wickedness dwells in the Heart of each Man whatsoever; yet nevertheless they find that there are diverse Sins, which they themselves naturally abhor. And again there are several other Sins so Diametrically opposite the one to the other, as that they cannot possibly lodge both in one Subject at once; as for Example, *Prophanness* and *Hypocrisy*, *Atheism* and *Superstition*, *Niggardlinesse* and *Prodigality*, are altogether incompatible: Whereas there is no such Contrariety between any of these four several Kinds particularly chosen.

But in brief I reason as follows, thus. These Sins which shew such clear and remarkable Tokens and Evidences of Unbelief, as that few equals them, but none exceeds them in such Evidences asofraid, on the one Hand; and then upon the other, have such powerful Influence upon Mankind, as that the most Part of the Children of Men, by far are subject and liable to be ensnared by them, when trysted with alluring and suitable Temptations, may justly be esteemed among the Number of these Streams or Heads of Wickedness proceeding from the Well-



Spring of *Atheism* and River of Unbelief, and running directly toward the infernal Ocean formerly mentioned: But these four Streams of Sin very lately spoken of, and particularly chosen by us, are such: *Ergo*, The Major or Former Proposition is clear, since it contains all the Requisites necessary for making up such a Stream; The Minor or Assumption, rests to be proven, which contains these two Branches.

*First*, That these four particularly chosen Kinds of Sins shews such clear and remarkable Tokens and Evidences.

And *Secondly*, That they have such powerful Influence upon Mankind. And as for the first, what more clear and remarkable Tokens and Evidences, of Atheisticall Unbelief can any Man think upon or imagine, then ( with the first of these particularly chosen Streams, or Heads ] to Doubt, Distrust, &c. Or with the 2<sup>d</sup> to Grudge or Murmure, as if that absolutely and in every respect perfect Being undoubtedly failed in some Perfection or other: Or with the 3<sup>d</sup>, to Sin any of the ways aforesaid in the use of Means, such as first by limiting the Almighty; as believing the Creatures Wisdom, or other Perfections, to exceed those of the Creator. Or 2<sup>dly</sup>, By using unlawful Means, as exactly believing as aforesaid. Or 3<sup>dly</sup>, By omitting the use of commanded Means, as King *Abaz*: *Isa*: 7. 12. Or 4<sup>thly</sup>, In carelessly going about the performance of such, as in both these Cases, doubting or believing such not to be the effect of never Erring Wisdom. Or 5<sup>thly</sup>, By trusting in, or relying upon them, as judging, or believing them ended

with

with Divine Perfections. Or with the 4<sup>th</sup> and last  
 To be anxiously or solicitously, taken up with the  
 Temporal Cares of this Life, as believing that GOD  
 himself did not particularly notice these small con-  
 cerns of Mankind, Diametrically opposit to our  
 Saviours Words Mat: 10. 26: 30. 31. And to  
 his Advice, or Command rather, Mat: 6, 25, And  
 to that of the Psalmist, Psa. 55. 22. And to that  
 of Peter 1 Pet 5, 7. Next as to the 2<sup>d</sup> Branch of  
 the Assumption or Minor. Viz, That these four par-  
 ticularly chosen kinds of Sins, have such powerful  
 influence upon Mankind, as that the most Part of the  
 Children of Men by far, are Subject and lyable to  
 be ensnared by them, when trysted with alluring  
 and suitable Temptations: Now this will appear  
 very evident, to any who will seriously consider  
 how not only all Unconverted and Unregenerate  
 Men ( and who by far, are the most part of Man-  
 kind ) are not only subject and lyable to be [ but  
 commonly and usually are ) ensnared by these four  
 particularly chosen kinds of Sins, when trysted with  
 alluring and suitable Temptations: But also many  
 true Converts and Holy Men have been ensnared  
 some by one, some by another, of these four Particu-  
 larly chosen kinds of Sins, and that more frequent-  
 ly then by any other kind of Sins whatsoever.  
 As for Example did not Abraham himself [ the Fa-  
 ther of the Faithful ] and whose failour in respect  
 of any other kind of Sin, is scarce to be found any  
 where upon Record ) fall two severall Times into  
 that self same Sin of Doubting or Distrust? Gen:  
 12. 13. and Gen: 20. 3 [ Which as we have  
 shoven is the first and chiefest Head Stream of Sin  
 flowing

flowing from the Fountain of Atheism, through the River of Unbelief) and thereby he was ensnared, to fall as often in the third Stream by the use of unlawful Means, to free himself? Did not Godly *Isaac* his Son fail the same way; falling into both these Streams or Heads of Sin. *Gen: 26. 7.* And whose other failing, in respect of any other kind of Sin whatsoever, I do not remember to find in the Scripture? Did not *Jacob* fall in both these kinds of Sins [ especially in the Latter of the Two, [ through the use of unlawfull Means ) *Gen: 27. 19.* Did not chaste and holy *Joseph* his Son fall oftner then once into that same Sin ( of whose other failings, I do not remember to have read in the Scriptures ) *Gen: 42. 11. Gen 44. 45.* How foully did *Peter* fall both into the first and third Stream by denying his Master, with Oaths and Curses? Yea and all the rest of the Disciples, by timorously forsaking him, when he was apprehended? And as for holy *David* [ the Man according to GOD's own Heart ] how frequently fell he into both these Streams? I shall one Day perish by Hand of *Saul*, sayes he, and that after the prophet *Samuel* had assured him in the Name of the LORD that he should be King. How doth the Psalmist fall into the 2d Stream of that unhappy River of unbelief in his murmuring at GOD's dealings *Psal: 73. 12. 13. 14.* And not only he but *Job*, *Jeremiah*, and *Jonas*. How remarkably Guilty are all of these Heroes? As for the 4th particularly chosen Stream or Head of Sin, proceeding from that unhappy River aforesaid, viz. anxious, carking & solicitous Cares, about temporal Concerns



concerns, altho unconverted and unregenerat Men  
 all most frequently in this Stream; Yet my Mem-  
 ry does not serve me to instance any one, of the  
 Sain's and Servants of GOD, whom the Scrip-  
 tures mention as Guilty hereof, except *Martha* a-  
 lone, whom our LORD sharply reprehended for  
 her too anxious Carefullness about temporal Con-  
 cerns, Luk: 10 41. Now here I have mentioned  
 some of the failings of the Saints, whom through  
 Inadvertency these respective Streams have turn-  
 ed off of their Feet; and yet whom the Lord of his  
 merciful Goodness, through the Grace of Repent-  
 ance, has recovered again, and has not permitted  
 them to be carried down with the Stream; and  
 whom by such warnings he has undoubtedly made  
 with a jealous Eye, more cautiously to notice and  
 guard against, and with the highest Detestation  
 more irreconcileably to abhor, all Atheistical Un-  
 belief evermore afterward: Now before I conclude  
 this Discourse, it will not be improper for me to  
 consider how I could Answer, should any object  
 against me, in manner following. A Number (such  
 Objectors might say) of the most Famous and E-  
 minent Champions of the Christian Religion in their  
 contending and grappling with this dangerous E-  
 nemy of Mankind (Atheism I mean) having evid-  
 enced the outmost Vigour of their Will, Skill and  
 Strength, in Levelling their Thrusts as smartly and  
 sharply as was possible for them, towards this E-  
 nemys Heart directly; and that with a firm purpose  
 and Resolution of giving him such a deadly Wound,  
 as that Mankind might be perfectly freed of him  
 ever more afterward, have notwithstanding [ to the  
 Displeasure

displeasure and great grief of their Hearts) perceived (by the motions of Life they saw in him there after) that the very sharpest of their Thrusts had come very far short of their Aim and Design: What are you a most contemptible Pigmy, both Old, Unlearned, Weak, and foolishly aiming at Impossibility, to presume to enter the Lists with such a terrible Monster, after you had seen such notable Heroes; as are formerly spoken of, so far disappointed? Can you imagine that such weak and tender Thrusts of yours, scarce marking his Skin, will make a Divorce between him and his Life, which none of these Worthys could ever Effectuat.

To this I answer, I am very far from entertaining any such thoughts, Yea further I Judge it altogether impossible for any to do so, till the Lord be pleased to take the Weapons in his own Hand. As for me, who finds my self pursued here with a dreadful four-headed Dart, most maliciously thrown against me, in my hazard-ing to enter into this combat (the first head whereof reflects upon mine Age, the second upon my qualifications, the third upon my weakness and inability, the fourth and last upon my Aim or Design) I intend through Divine Assistance to give a rational return to each one of these. As to the first, proposed in contempt of mine Age; tho I acknowledge my self to be old; yet who dare presume to limite the Holy One of Israel to this or that Degree of Age, since as he both can, and really doth (tho not so frequently, yet sometimes as certainly) save by few as by many: 1. Sam: 14. 6. 2 Chron: 14. 11.

2 Chron: 20. 12. and to the End thereof:  
 Even so he both can, and really doth (tho not  
 so frequently, yet sometimes as certainly) serve  
 himself and advance his own Honour, by Infants  
 and Sucklings, in the one extream; and by old  
 and weak Ones, in the other extream of Age;  
 as by young and strong Men, in their flourish-  
 ing Youth; by an old *Eli* or *Simeon*, as by  
 a young *Phineas* or *Elibu*: For though these  
 young Men exceeded (as ordinarily young Men  
 do exceed) the old, in the Zealousness or Vigor  
 of their Actions or discourse; yet the old (rege-  
 nerat old Men I understand) very far outstrip  
 the young, in their humility, Patience, Self-deny-  
 al, contempt of the World, Cheerful Submission,  
 and entire resignation to the Divine Will, and  
 other such Man-abasing, and GOD exalting Graces  
 and Vertues (all which are most acceptable in the  
 Sight of GOD, Yea more acceptable than any,  
 ordinarily appearing most brightly in the Lives and  
 Conversations of religious and godly young Men)  
 yea the Favour of old Men in such Zeal, or Vi-  
 gor as aforesaid, is not so much their Sin, as the  
 Weakness and Infirmity of Nature, whereas the  
 Favour of young Men in these other Graces  
 is constantly attended with some Degree of Sin.  
 Further it is observable, that diverse Times that  
 same Man outstrips himself, & shines more bright-  
 ly in his old Age then in his Youth, in the Graces of  
 Humility, Patience: &c. Yea and even in Faith it  
 self: As for Instance *DAVID*, who altho a Man  
 according to GOD's own Heart, yet, (notwith-  
 standing of GOD's most faithful Promise, that  
 he



he should be King) will you but observe how low an Ebb sometimes all such Graces run in his Youth and again how highly they flow when trysted with as great Straits in his old Age: For that End compare 1 Sam: 27, with 2 Sam: 16, 10, 11, 12. Besides several other remarkable Places, and then judge as Reason doth dictate; and indeed this ordinarily falls out to godly and religious Men; who, the nearer they draw unto old Age, usually their Humility, Patience, Contempt of the World, and other heavenly Graces of this Kind, daily grow shine, and appear more bright in the Eyes of all Men. Yea further, I humbly conceive, there is no such Fear of Excess in those Graces, wherein old Men outstrip the young; as perhaps there may be in those others, wherein the young Men exceed the old: Yea finally, has not the Lord assuredly promised, that sometimes he will remarkably favour such as he pleases, by causing them bring forth such pleasant Fruit in their old Age? A pertinent Scripture for this, is that Psal: 92, 12, 13, 14. And who can certainly affirm that, that most sweet and encouraging Promise, doth noways belong unto me? Next as to the second Head, Tho I acknowledge here also my Learning to be very small: Yet who will shew themselves so ignorant, as to affirm that the Almighty GOD has tied, or promised his Blessing to the wise and learned ones of the World only: And to such Works as are performed alienarly by such? How clearly would those, who affirmed so, contradict that very notable

able Scripture 1 Cor: 1, 27? And doth not Our blessed SAVIOUR Himself heartily thank His heavenly Father, for that wonderful distinguishing Kindness of His, manifested towards even Babes, by revealing such saving Truths unto them, as were hid from the Wise and Prudent, Matt: 11, 27? Yea here again, I am sure none below GOD himself can be certain, that I am altogether excluded out of the Number of these happy Ones.

So passing this, As to the third Particular which reflects upon my Weakness hereunto, I shall give thir four short Answers following. First, I shall answer with the Scripture Eccles: 9, 11. *That the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong*: For undoubtedly a most wise and adorable Providence over-ruleth all Things. Secondly, Souldiers never was, nor ever will be of equal Strength; for it is acknowledged by all, that every Souldier cannot match Sampson or Goliab. Thirdly, The weakest Souldier is obliged by the Law of Nature, to shew himself as forward and willing to defend and preserve his native Country, from being over-run, and destroyed by the Enemy, as the strongest. Fourthly, Even the weakest Souldier may happen at a Time, to throw such a Ball, (a favourable Providence concurring therewith) as might do considerable Skaith in the Enemies Camp.

So finally, As to the fourth and last Head, implying my Aim or Design; as for this all my Aim herein, is, First, To shew the great Abhorrence

horrence and Detestation, which I carry towards this hellish Impiety. And Secondly, To see if the LORD will be pleased to favour me so far as [ who knows, nor he may ! ] He, I say, who has many times already brought about the most excellent Ends, by the most unlikely and despicable Means, and likewise by the weakest and most worthless Instruments ( even sometimes by some as contemptible as my self ), as for Instance: By the Touch of a Stick, to draw Water out of a hard Rock: By the Sounding of Rams-Horns, to bring down the Walls of a warlike City: By the Voice of a Man, to cause both Sun and Moon stand still in the Midst of Heaven about a whole Day: By anointing a Belly-blind's Eyes with Spittle and Clay, to grant him his perfect Sight: By the Ministry of Herd-Men and Fishers ( the most vulgar Employment in Use among the Children of Men ) to bring about the most desireable Ends imaginable, Viz, The Advancement of his own Glory, and the eternal Happiness of Mens Souls: He, I say, who so frequently has wrought so wonderfully and admirably hitherto: Who knows nor he may be pleased, of his gracious Goodness, to make me an Instrument or Tool in his Hand ( tho both most weak and unworthy ) at the least, of engaging some others, of no higher Attainments than my self, to consider seriously, and remark timeously, the dreadful Danger of splitting upon this Rock. And carefully improving all necessary Means, and dutiful Pains, for eviting the same? For [ here to end, as I did begin the pre-

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sent Discourse ] indeed it is no Marvel, tho I be affected with Horror, and horrible Detestation at this GOD - Dishonouring and Soul - Murthering Wickedness of Atheistical Impiety, Incredulity, or Unbelief; when I reflect upon the dreadful Effects thereof; in all Ages, and throughout the whole Universe; But especially and chiefly upon my own Heart as said is. So not resolving to repeat more of the Matter we have been instantly handling, I shall desist from enlarging any further on this Head. Only this one shifting Pretence following of the Atheists, must be considered and refuted, before we altogether close this discourse: For it may be supposed that, as an Excuse of his shifting Pretence, he will alledge as follows. *I hate to be cheated with Shews and Appearances, says he, for if their be no such Being as GOD, Oh! What can I say then, when wise Men will mock me, and term me, silly poor credulous Wretch, thus abjectly to be frighted by a Pretence of Religion; set up as a Bugbear to scarr timorous Fools, who will not examine Things deep to the Bottom; but Child-like; and simply believe all alledged.* To which Scruple and Objection, it is answered: The same implyes a clear Contradiction, in so far as it holds out Religion as a meer Pretence only: Which may easily appear, if we consider, how that on the one Hand, whoever pretends Religion ( albiet for produceing the most desiraeable Ends imaginable ) if it be for a Pretence meerly and for nothing else, as in this Place is alledged; do thereby render themselves confessed and notable Cheats and Deceivers; and yet upon the other Hand,

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the Ends and Designs Religion aims at, drive forward, and advances; being such as *Flows* and *Proceeds* from the most lovely and delectable Fountain of the most highly enflamed Love and affection towards GOD, sincere and cordial good Will and Kindness towards all Men, prudent and commendable Endeavours of prosecuting their own real Good and Advantage, who are particularly and principally employed therein, and *Slides through*, and *Runs in* a most pleasant and delicious Channel, inclosed within such high and remarkable Banks, as not only might include Men within the Bounds of their Duty, but further contains Room enough for the free Passage of all those mighty Streams of Divine Graces, blessed and favourable Providences, which if not carelessly slighted, resisted and misimproved, in all Men certainly might, and in such as prudently comply therewith, undoubtedly doth move and act them forward unto, yea encourage and assist them, in the daily Practice of all the most happy and honourable Exercises, the human Nature is capable of performing, during this Life; such as to love, fear, obey, glorify and trust in God, to carry and behave themselves temperately and soberly, in all their own particular Concerns and Affairs; And likewise equally and straightly under, and answerable unto, all the various Methods of GOD's Dealings with them: To walk kindly and affectionately, one with another, and to exped and dispatch, all just, righteous and charitable Offices, one towards another, to subdue their Corruptions, moderate

drive and regulat their Passions, and Affections; mortify and kill all their immoderat and inordinat Appetits, Desires and Inclinations, after any temporal Enjoyment imaginable; fight against, resist and overcome all the violent Temptations the Devil or the World without Intermission continually assaults them with; and unweariedly and diligently endeavour to abstain from all Sins and Offences, irregular and culpable Actions, Words and Thoughts whatsoever, which the very unprejudicat Principle of Reason, within them cannot but disallow and condemn, as vicious and hateful. And finally *Terminats* and *Ends* in the most desirable and boundless Ocean both of the Glory of GOD, (then advanced by them to the highest Degree their corrupted Natures are capable to be Instruments of) and ravishing Vision of his blessed Face, and sweetest Enjoyment of his most refreshing, Life-preserving and Joy-encreasing Presence, and of all comfortable and Spirit-rejoicing Happiness and Blessedness in him, and with him eternally. These Ends I say, promoted by Religion (being so holy and heavenly, high, honourable and happy as aforesaid; and tending so directly to refine and elevate the Nature of Man, to the highest Pitch possible, either in this Life, or in that succeeding this present) do neither stand in need of, nor (seing they offer no byassing Motives, nor self-interessing Allurements to any) can possibly be the Product of any meer Pretence, Cheat or Deceit imaginable: And therefore consequently hence we may learn, the natural and



genuine Ends of Religion (whatever Abuses Men may make hereof; Or whatever crooked Designs they may endeavour to further thereby) to be most pure, simple, and free of all Falshood and Fraud whatsoever.

But *Secondly*, I say, Who below the Author of Nature as aforesaid, could impose, stamp and impress such an indelible Notion, General and irresistible Perswasion (as Religion includes) upon the Spirits of all Men without Exception?

And *Thirdly*, What could move or necessitate this omnipotent Author presently mentioned, to invent or make Use of any Tricks, Pretences or Deceits in commanding and ruling his own silly Creatures. Whom (did he please) he could instantly reduce unto nothing. So that this may instruct you, that you cannot be cheated, while you regard, nor comply with, no religious Dictates, but such as are universally engraven upon all Men, of which Kind is the Existence of a Deity, the immediat Subject of our present Debate. And whereas ye *Atheists* seem frightened that wise Men will mock you, your Fear in this Case is needless and vain; for altho Fools may, yea certainly will mock you, unless you resolve to turn a Fool, as they are (and which unhappy Resolution of yours might perhaps prove but a small Defence unto you, against this Ground of your Fear either; since Fools are ready to mock one another, and for which Reason the Derision of such [if you shew your self rational] should be nothing valued by you; yet no wise Man will mock you for firmly believing the Existence of

of a Diety, which I shall most clearly prove unto you, by some of the most uncontraverted Principles of Reason residing in your Bosom: Which that we may accordingly perform, it will be necessary for us rationally to observe, both who are the wise Men, and how they would carry in this Affair, we are presently questioning: for which end we will divide Mankind into three, or, if you will, for your more full Satisfaction and clearer Information, into four several Ranks ( albeit the fourth be so notably Superfluous as that one single Man of such an odd Qualification did never heretofore, nor can possibly exist ) Viz. First, Of such as [ from the deep Consideration of that adorable and amazing Wisdom, Power and Goodness, they constantly behold, perspicuously shineing throughout all the glorious Frame of this whole World in general, and in each one of, and among the many various Beings therein contained, in particular, and that both in Respect of their Original, Order, and those remarkable Occurrences, both ordinary and extraordinary, discernable among them continually; and also from diverse other famous and infallible Marks and Evidences observable by Mankind, particularly applicable unto some one only matchless and singular, all-commanding and over-ruling Governour and Disposer ] have attained the Hight of being undoubtedly and assuredly perswaded that certainly there is, and necessarily must be a God, or *supreme Being*, whose unquestionably certain, and indispensibly necessary Existence, they are at every time capable to prove and evidence against

gainst the most obstinat and resolute *Atheist*, by the clearest Arguments, the Principles of Reason can possibly require, if such will only yeild to be determined thereby. Of which Rank of Men, there are many Thousands presently living in this habitable World.

Or *Secondly*, Such as weakly and faintly only, altho truly, believe that there is, or, at the least supposes that perhaps there may be, some such an excellent and adorable Being; but such a firm Perswasion of whose real Existence, as we have instantly mentioned, The Weakness of their Knowledge, together with their heedless & precipitat Inadvertency, or culpable Neglect of due Consideration, intirely debarrs them of, and altogether incapacitats them, to be in any Measure qualified with: Of which Rank, again there are no fewer but rather many more Thousands dispersed through the World then of the preceeding.

Or *Thirdly*, Such as fancies or supposes, that perhaps there is no such unaccountable Being; or yet such as their various Lives (by engaging their Interest to comply with such absurd and irrational Conceits) may have made them so highly to exceed this doubtful and wavering Degree, As First, To wish there were none such, Secondly, To hope, Thirdly, To believe, And Fourthly, (without any rational Ground whatsoever, or rather out over the very Belly of the most solidly rational Principles) most groundlessly and foolishly in some Sort to perswade themselves, that no such Being hath any Existence, as can call them to a Reckoning, and  
righteously



righteously punish them for their former Misdemeanor: Their Happiness consisting, as they most unhappily flatter themselves, in no less contradictory an Impossibility; then of compleatly abstracting, and intirely withholding, all possible Kind of Existence, from the most indispensibly necessar Being, from, by, in, and upon whom alone, they, & all other Beings whatsoever, most inevitably do draw their Original, intirely subsist, and altogether depend.

And now of the lowest Degree of this 3<sup>d</sup> Rank of Men [ viz, of such who fancies or supposes that perhaps there is no such incomparable Being ) there are without Question many in the World, whose Faces perchance the ignominious and shamefull Name of an *Atheist*, obliges them to cover; that none may discern them : But as for the rest of the ascending Degrees hereof, the more atrocious their Crimes are, the higher their Danger is, and Number correspondently alwayes the fewer, and still more or less accordingly they esteem themselves concerned to maintain or disown such irrational Principles, as they stand removed from, or advancing towards the highest Degree of *Atheistical* Impiety ; ( and which indeed few, yea a very few Number, in Respect of the innumerable Multitude of Mankind, have been so miserably unhappy as to touch ) but once being mounted to that damnable Hight, then [ all Kind of Visards & Masks being publickly throwen away ) openly and avowedly they slight and deny GOD. But passing these, let us proceed in

in our intended Enumeration, and say, or 4thly and Lastly such as neither fancy or suppose only, that perhaps they may not be, nor yet faintly or weakly believe, no such Being as GOD to exist. But furthermore also are most undoubtedly and assuredly perswaded. ( Let us suppose so I say, for your more full Information in, and easier uptakeing of, this Case ) and that upon the most solide uncontraverted Principle of Reason, that certainly there were no such Being as GOD; and which Assertion of theirs they could evidence by the clearest Light, Humanity is capable either to discern, desire, or demonstrat, against all such as own or maintain a Diety; as pungently and cogently as the first Rank of Men could possibly prove and make good the contrary: But Men of this Stamp are so miraculous ( or rather simply impossible, and contradictorious Monsters ) as Nature never did, nay nor yet ( she or any other Power whatsoever ) ever was heretofore, or shall be capable afterwards to produce, so much as one single Person: And no marvel seing how soon we can prove the Sun while really shining, the Wind while blowing, the Water while running, the Fire while burning, the Earth while actually yeilding Fruit, and all the other Ordinances of Heaven and Earth while unweariedly expeding their dutifull, diurnal, or annual offices; to have no Kind of Existence imaginable: Then, yea, and scarce then, but at the nearest never till then, shall it be possible for any to evidence the most necessar Being, that  
either

either is, or can be conceiv'd ( upon which, all these presently mentioned, and all other Beings, either existent or possible, do intirely depend : And without which, no other Being could possibly ever had any Degree of Existence, or yet possibly could subsist for a Moment ) not only to have been any way necessary, but even not so much as simply to exist. So then, all the Race of Mankind being thus divided, the next particular we are concerned to advert to, is, to which of these four Classes presently spoken of, the wise Man would joyn himself : Now here, without any kind of Hesitation, his Reason would oblige him ( without hearkning to which, he could never shew himself a wise Man ) to shun the third and fourth ( upon the very first Sound that he heard of their Principles ( and that not only as foolish, and absurdly irrational; but furthermore also, in the highest Degree dreadfully dangerous : Nor yet would he content himself to be one of the second Rank being certainly perswaded, that the low Degree of Knowledge, together with the Weakness of the Faith, of all such, as belong'd to that second Rank only, could not possibly choose, but expose and subject them to many fearfull and dangerous Temptations, and that both from the Devil, the World, and their own filthy Lusts, and sensual Inclinations ; And consequently his Wisdom would undoubtedly engage him, with the greatest Alacrity and Cheerfulness, to fly unto the first Rank : And so, to the End that he might shew himself



a worthy Member of such a prudent and intelligent Society, he would labour by all means to grow in Knowledge daily, till he found himself once capable by the meer Strength of Reason to convince and confound the most resolute *Atheist*. So for a Conclusion of all this Discourse, we earnestly wish the LORD to make what is aforesaid, remarkably tend to the Advancement of his own Glory; and to the Furtherance of the eternal Happiness both of the Author and Reader.

# FINIS.

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*Printed at the Foot of the Horse-Wynd.*

*Price in Sheets 2 Shill. 6 Pence 9d. In Boards 3 Shill. 6 Pence 9d. In Leather 5 Shill. 6 Pence 9d. In Scots.*